

Resource Recycling Advisory Commission
Meeting of May 18 2020
7:00 p.m.
Via Webex

Members Present: Stephan Alison, Bessie Bianco, Alison Johnson, Rebecca MacLachlan.

Members not present: Monica Belyea, Chantel DeArmitt, Izzy Guy, Robin Hanson , Harold Panciera, Debbie Stanley, Krishna Winston.

Public Works Staff Present: Kim O'Rourke, Recycling Coordinator

Meeting Notes

Welcome to Stephan Alison, the Commission's newest member.

Alison Johnson said because we didn't have a quorum, we should just get a quick review from the Recycling Coordinator.

Ms. O'Rourke said both trash and recycling have been deemed to be essential, so both operations have continued. Residential trash and recycling has escalated. Commercial trash and recycling has decreased, especially clean corrugated cardboard. Residential single stream has become more important, especially paper materials because of the increased shipping (to homes) and toilet paper demands. The decrease in the bottle bill material (because of it being suspended) has also created supply problems for manufacturers.

Ms. O'Rourke said that most of her spring events were cancelled due to COVID-19. The only one that was rescheduled is the Compost Bin and Rain Barrel Sale. The sale will continue. The distribution day is now July 18th. It depends on how many purchases are made, but she shouldn't need any volunteers for this event. Orders will need to be placed by July 14th. The event will probably be organized just to put bins and barrels in customer's cars.

Ms. O'Rourke said she received many calls on the paper shredding event that was cancelled in April. It has not been rescheduled but the RiverCOG region is hosting one on June 13 in East Hampton and another one in Middlefield on August 15.

Simple Recycling has suspended collection of the pink bags and Ms. O'Rourke is unsure when it will resume. They told her they were phasing in the CT collection and hoped to start collection in Middletown in Mid-May, but she hasn't heard anything yet. (NOTE: since this meeting, Simple Recycling has started their collection again). Ms. O'Rourke said during this period, she has been referring people to the Baystate bins at the Senior

Center and various schools. Thanks to Harold Panciera for setting all those locations up with collection bins!

Ms. O'Rourke is writing a grant proposal for to increase food scrap collection at the recycling center. The proposal will include kitchen food scrap containers for participants and other incentives to encourage more people to participate. Currently, one cart of material is generated weekly. We also hope to get permission to offer carts in other locations in different parts of town. Many people can't get to the recycling center during the hours it is open, so if it would be helpful if the City offers drop offs in other locations.

She is also working on specifications for a bid to collect food waste from downtown restaurants. The timing of this might be a little difficult, considering COVID, but hopefully a bid will go out in the fall and we can see if it is possible to do.

Ms. O'Rourke she has been doing virtual programs on recycling, composting and preschool programs. She hopes to do more since she will not be able to go into facilities for face to face programs.

The Swap Shack is currently closed. The Commission will see how life proceeds to determine if, when and how it should open.

The next meeting will be held on June 22, 2020, mostly likely still via Webex.

The meeting ended at 7:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim O'Rourke

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Recycling Coordinator